

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

VIETNAM ADVISORY GROUP

MAILING ADDRESS : MSU-USOM
AMERICAN EMBASSY
SAIGON — VIETNAM

CABLE ADDRESS : MICHGOVBUR

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADVISOR

GENERAL OFFICE :
137, DUONG PASTEUR

TELEPH. NUMBER : 22.022-21.528

SAIGON : 383-384

August 8, 1958

TO: Coordinator

FROM: Chief Advisor *lms*

SUBJECT: Participants Vu Quoc Thong (MSU) and Vu Van Thai (USOM)

We assume that you are going ahead with the schedule for Vu Quoc Thong. Enclosed in this same letter is a tentative itinerary, and although there may be slight changes in it, it looks as though he will be in California on August 20 or 21 as was originally predicted. We will await further word from you as to the Los Angeles or San Francisco arrival point.

Robert Blum John Dorsey and I discussed his trip with him just two days ago. We told him that you would be scheduling him once he arrived in the United States and that his return itinerary would be prepared by you. We suggested to him that he would probably want to visit the Asia Foundation offices in San Francisco, the Kellogg Foundation (he knows Dr. Morris), and the Ford Foundation in New York. *Battle Creek Paul Burness* He will also want to visit the United Nations, particularly the technical assistance people, and the various research offices in the Washington area. In the Midwest he will also want to see the Clearing House in Chicago and organizations doing public administration research.

It seems to me that you must use a good deal of your own judgment in setting up a program for a leader such as Thong. My comments above and previously are merely suggestions. However, if you have not thought of the Asia Foundation in San Francisco, I urge you to take that suggestion seriously, since the Foundation Saigon representative, Ed Pike, would want him to stop there, and he has already discussed the possibility of some Asia Foundation financing for the Research Center.

A general word of caution which probably is not necessary but my conservative nature drives me to it. Thong is a sensitive individual and will expect to be mainly his own boss while he is in the States.

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He will have to be treated with respect and given a position of importance at any gathering he attends. I am sure that Wes can give you all the details on this if you do not already have them. I hasten to add, however, that during the past three months our relationship has been quite cordial, and he has come closer to informality than I expected him to just a few months ago. Along this line, I hope that somebody will be able to meet him in California. Although his English is now good and most of our meetings are held entirely in English, somebody could help him along in his initial meetings by slowing down the conversation and pinpointing the pertinent facts so that Thong can get them without having to merely shake his head in recognition of the general subject being covered. I suggest that you or Guy Fox or Wes Fishel meet him in California and accompany him on some of his visits there before going ahead to the Midwest. Cable your intentions on this, please.

We do not know if Thong will be the Director of the Research Center. Our guess is that he probably will not be appointed by the President to this job. If we hear anything about this, we will let you know. He will have a definite interest in the Research Center even though he may not be active in it after it gets started.

As for the APSA meetings, you will have to be sure that Thong is properly recognized and escorted.

Now let me go on to Mr. Vu Van Thai. Thai will be going to the United States probably in late September or October on a USOM participant program. He told me just two nights ago that he has now received the approval of the President for about four weeks away from Saigon. Thai is the Director of the Budget and Director of Foreign Aid, and most of his time will be spent in Washington, D.C. However, we expect to get him to East Lansing for at least three days so that he can see the University, meet old friends there, visit the State administrative offices, and take a look at Mystic if it is in operation.

As soon as we have some word on his actual itinerary, we will get it to you. Wes will tell you all about Vu Van Thai. Let me merely add that in my estimation he is the outstanding public administrator in Vietnam. There are a few others like him, but he has the breadth and insight which cannot help but be admired.

I have discussed possible points of interest with him, and have gone into the possibility of his appearing before a small faculty seminar set up by the International Programs office. Thai would be willing to express some ideas on "The Psychology of Foreign Aid." You can rest assured that what he says will be stimulating, and if such a seminar is set up I urge you to be sure that among the 20 or 30 faculty people there you have a few all set to ask questions and move into intelligent discussion.

There are certain courtesy calls which both Vu Quoc Thong and Vu Van Thai should make in the Michigan area. A visit to the deans whom they have met and to President Hannah would be important. A visit to Governor Williams might definitely be in order, and some calls by Vu Quoc Thong on appropriate Legislative leaders would be desirable since Thong is the Vice President of the National Assembly. In Washington Mac Salter discussed with us the probability of arranging a call on Vice President Nixon and a few other Congressional leaders when Vu Quoc Thong is there. Talk to Mac about this.

RHS/dcm

cc: Dr. John T. Dorsey
Mr. Howard Waltman

Elsie

August 27, 1958

TO: The Coordinator
FROM: Howard L. Waltman, Participant Director
SUBJECT: No. 14 - Re: Your Memo on Le Van Kim of Aug 20

Mr. Le Van Kim is the Technical Assistant to Mr. Vu Van Thai. In conjunction with USOM, we have planned a two-month trip for Mr. Kim which will enable him to study matters relating to budget, governmental auditing, accounting and mechanical tabulation.

Mr. Kim will be travelling on MSU funds but his program will be arranged by ICA/W. A program proposal, stating his departure date as September 15, has already been sent to ICA/W. It has been requested that Mr. Kim be scheduled for two weeks in East Lansing. ICA/W has been requested to contact you on the exact dates of this two-week visit and on any other matters of coordination on Mr. Kim's program. We hope that we will be able to dovetail a portion of Kim's program with that of Thai's, specifically, that portion devoted to the inspection of electronic equipment.

HLW:mrw

cc: Dr. John T. Dorsey, Jr.

Elsie

September 20, 1958

TO: The Coordinator
FROM: Howard L. Waltman, Participant Director
SUBJECT: No. 27 - Le Van Kim

Mr. Le Van Kim's departure is being held up pending a visa listing from Washington. We are hopeful that Mr. Kim will be able to leave Saigon on or about October 1. USOM is beginning to feel acute embarrassment regarding Kim's departure. They have been putting as much pressure as possible on ICA/W for the visa listing.

We have not yet received a program outline for Kim from ICA/W. Have you received any information from them on his program? One important consideration is that Mr. Kim would like to spend his two weeks in East Lansing at the same time that Marv Murphy will be there. This, and the fact that Kim would like a portion of his training to dovetail with Thai's for the purpose of inspecting electronic equipment, are two program conditions that you should keep in mind.

I will keep you posted by cable from this point on the status of Kim's trip.

HLW:mrw

Elsie
I guess Kim & Thai will
separate

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADVISOR

GENERAL OFFICE:
177, DUONG PASTEUR

TELEPH. NUMBER: 22.022-21.328

SAIGON: 383-284

September 25, 1958

TO: Coordinator
FROM: Chief Advisor
SUBJECT: Le Van Kim

We have received the visa list number on Kim, and he will be leaving at about the time Vu Van Thai does. I hope to have a tentative itinerary enclosed in this letter when it goes out tomorrow. As it stands now, Kim will leave here about October 2, spend two days in Japan, perhaps one night on the Pacific Coast, and arrive in East Lansing about October 8 or 9. Kim will spend a week or ten days in East Lansing. Assuming Marvin Murphy is there, you will have no difficulty in setting up a worthwhile program for Kim. Marv knows him well and has worked with him in the Budget office.

In conversation this morning, Kim told me that he would like to spend some time looking at the administrative offices of the State and looking at the University. In the State offices, he is most interested in budget administration, tax administration, and, as a surprise to me, motor vehicle registration. At the University, he would like to see the University in general so as to get an idea as to what an American university is like. He should also be given some time with the computer, and should be able to observe the IBM operation.

Kim is a highly capable, bright young man who is one of the reasons why Vu Van Thai's operation has been so successful. He speaks English fluently, knows his electronics equipment, and can hold his own on administrative matters. Be sure that nobody tries to talk down to Kim because he is the equal of any of the younger administrators in Vietnam. I have the impression that he is quite excited about the trip, and I am very pleased that we did not have to disappoint him by failing to receive the visa number in time.

He will come home by way of Europe and will arrange his stops with Thai when Thai is in the United States. His ticket will be open from Lansing on, and we leave it to you to get him scheduled from there on. Be in touch with ICA/Washington on him since, as you know, they are directly interested in him.

Kim mentioned that he would like to visit the PAS setup in Chicago if he has a chance. We leave it to you to decide whether the timing will permit this. He would also like to be in East Lansing when Vu Van Thai is there, but I am not sure that can be arranged, and we will be checking on it at this end.

RHS/dcm

cc: Howard Waltman

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GENERAL OFFICE:
137, DUONG PASTEUR

TELEPH. NUMBER: 22.022-21.528

SAIGON: 3 8 3 - 3 8 4

September 25, 1958

TO: Coordinator

FROM: Chief Advisor *RAH*

SUBJECT: Vu Van Thai

The latest information we have is that Thai will leave here on October 2. He will proceed directly to East Lansing and spend about three days there. This is subject to change at any moment, and if there is any change I will cable you. Furthermore, I will cable when I have the exact arrival time in East Lansing.

You asked for some biographical material on Thai. Here's the best we have: Born January 26, 1919 in Hanoi; (License des Sciences, Ecole des Arts et Manufactures in Paris; scholarship at the National Center of Scientific Research, Paris, 1944-1956; Director of Les Presses Scientifiques Internationales, 1951-1954; returned to Vietnam late 1954 or early 1955; in 1955 became Director General of Planning; in December 1955 appointed to head Foreign Aid administration; in April 1957 his agency and title changed to Director General of Foreign Aid and Budget under the Presidency. (Has frequently represented Vietnam at international conferences or on special missions: attended 11th session of the Economic Commission for Asia and Far East (ECAFE) in Tokyo, March 1955; 7th session of ECAFE committee on trade and industry in Tokyo, March 1955; August 1956 accompanied Secretary of State at the Presidency Chau to India for high-level discussions, which included the question of diplomatic relations between the two countries; represented Vietnam at second meeting of ECAFE's Working Group for development and economic planning in Bangkok, September 17-29, 1956; delegate to the ministerial meetings of Colombo Plan in New Zealand; attended ECAFE conference in Bangkok, March 18-29, 1957; member of the party accompanying President on state visit to the United States, May 1957; accompanied President on state visit to Korea, September 1957; and member of the committee appointed to organize Colombo Plan Conference in October 1957. Mr. Thai is married and has three children.

RHS/dcm

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADVISOR

GENERAL OFFICE:
137, DUONG PASTEUR

TELEPH. NUMBER: 22.022-21.928

SAIGON: 3 8 3 - 3 8 4

September 29, 1958

TO: Coordinator
FROM: Chief Advisor
SUBJECT: Thai and Kim

As I am cabling you today, we now have much firmer dates on Thai and Kim. I am also cabling to you the fact that Vu Van Thai would be willing to meet with a faculty seminar and discuss with them matters of economic development in Vietnam. As I have mentioned before, Thai can do an excellent job on this subject and can generalize beyond Vietnam. I hope that the faculty group you will assemble will include some hand-picked individuals so that they can not only benefit but also give a good account of our faculty.

Wes Fishel knows Vu Van Thai very well and can tell you about any particular interests he may have. I might mention that Thai has one somewhat disconcerting habit. Although he speaks English perfectly, he sometimes hesitates between words and unless you are aware of this you may find yourself breaking into his trend of thought when you do not intend to.

I hope that you are setting up the seminar for rather late in his stay in East Lansing. He will arrive very tired since he is going straight through from Saigon to Lansing.

RHS/dcm

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October 14, 1958

TO: Howard L. Waltman, Participant Director
FROM: Elsie Cunningham
SUBJECT: Mr. Vu Van Thai and Mr. Le Van Kim

Mr. Thai and Mr. Kim have spent Friday morning at "MYSTIC". Yesterday Mr. Kim met with various staff members in a session mainly devoted to Mystic.

Today he is spending the day with Mr. Murphy at the State Development Offices and will be visiting the Motor Vehicle Registration Operation tomorrow afternoon. Present plans call for him to leave on Thursday evening and continue to Chicago to spend one day at Sears and Roebuck observing the computer operations and then continuing to Washington, where he will be programmed by ICA to accompany Mr. Thai in various organizations.

There was no information to indicate that Mr. Kim's stop-overs in Tokyo were to be official business, however, I gather from conversations that this was programmed from Saigon as official business.

EC:ms